

## SOCIETY FOR CURRICULUM STUDY

### NEWS BULLETIN

1933 : No. 4.

September 25, 1933.

#### REVISION OF IDAHO STATE COURSES OF STUDY

The State Board of Education of the State of Idaho has issued four courses in the last year which were developed under the direction of Mr. R. D. Russell, acting dean of the School of Education of the University of Idaho. The bulletins are the product of the active cooperation of general and special curriculum workers who advised and directed many teachers, supervisors, and administrators in an intensive study over a period of over two years. Every member of a production committee was given full credit toward a degree at the University of Idaho. The summer school at the University in 1930, 1931, and 1932 was made the headquarters of committee work. Mr. L. T. Hopkins spent two weeks in 1931 and 1932 working with the committees. Besides the faculty of the University the normal school faculties cooperated in the program. The bulletins cover the following subjects: Science for High Schools; Home Economics for Junior and Senior High Schools; Mathematics for Junior and Senior High Schools; and English for Junior and Senior High Schools.

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#### AN INFORMAL COOPERATIVE CURRICULUM GROUP

Mr. U. W. Leavell of George Peabody College for Teachers writes: "For some years we have had a group of teachers, supervisors, and administrators doing curriculum construction and evaluation. The group consists of about fifty individuals in public schools and in teacher training schools throughout the south. Our main interest is in instruction materials. We send out from our department certain materials to be used experimentally with accompanying evaluation and criticism sheets. In the light of the returns a local committee refines the original material. The refined units are then made available to teachers and school administrators.

This group is an informal organization. It is called the McMurry Study Group in honor of Dr. Charles McMurry whose work in this field was an inspiration for many years. We do not contract to send materials out in regular series, but whenever any materials are available here or are forwarded to us by the members of the group from the field, they are distributed through this office."

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#### A STUDY OF TEACHING DIFFICULTIES

Those engaged in teacher training will be interested in an educational monograph of the New York State Teachers Association entitled, "Pre-Service and In-Service Training of Elementary School Teachers" by W. W. Cox and Ethel L. Cornell of the Educational Research Division of the New York State Education Department. This monograph is No. 2 and is issued under date of August, 1932. A questionnaire pertaining to teaching difficulties, based on the Commonwealth Teachers Training Study, was given to teachers and their supervisors. The data show the specific difficulties of teachers in subject matter preparation and in other duties. The principal difficulties follow: keeping all pupils working; planning work that is effective in helping slow pupils; planning schedules to give time for individual work; handling special cases of discipline; training pupils in methods of study; handling more than one group in a class.

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## OBJECTIVES OF COMMERCIAL EDUCATION

The March 1933 issue of the National Business Education Quarterly is devoted to the theme: General Objectives and Fundamental Principles of Commercial Education, and is edited by John O. Malott of the U. S. Office of Education. Mr. Snedden and Mr. Charters discuss procedures in determining objectives of commercial education. General objectives, guidance objectives, and vocational objectives are discussed by Mr. P. W. L. Cox, Mr. John M. Brewer, and Mr. F. G. Nichols, respectively.

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## THE FLORIDA PROGRAM OF CURRICULUM REVISION.

The Elementary Course of Study for Florida schools issued recently, is the result of a curriculum revision program extending over a period of more than three years. The first meeting of the Steering Committee to formulate ways and means for carrying out the program took place June 19, 1929. The manuscript went to press in the spring of 1933.

The actual work of production has been done by committees of Florida teachers and supervisors under the direction of Dr. M. R. Hinson of the State Department of Public Instruction.

Funds for defraying the expense of committee meetings, expenses of subject specialists, clerical services for the Director and much of the materials used by the production committees were furnished by the General Education Board. This board also gave funds for scholarships for twelve members of the Reviewing and Unifying Committee who worked in the curriculum laboratory of Peabody College during the summer of 1932.

The Division of Surveys and Field Studies of George Peabody College for Teachers, Dr. Frank P. Bachman, Director, furnished the services of Dr. Hollis L. Caswell and Dr. Doak S. Campbell, Associate Directors of the Division, as consultants. Dr. Caswell served as consultant for the elementary course of study and Dr. Campbell as consultant for the high school courses. The Division of Surveys and Field Studies also defrayed a large part of the expense of typing the manuscript of the courses, and gave other financial assistance.

The Florida Education Association gave valuable assistance by providing through its districts, funds for sharing the necessary expense of bringing subject specialists to the State. Mr. James S. Rickards, Executive Secretary of this association, gave publicity to the program through The Journal of the Florida Education Association and also was instrumental in giving a large place to the curriculum on programs of the association.

The work of unifying the Physical and Health Education Course was done at Florida State College for Women and at the University of Florida. The work of unifying the High School Home Economics Course was done at the Florida State College for Women.

The following persons rendered valued assistance as subject specialists in the fields named: Language Arts, Dr. J. Paul Leonard, College of William and Mary; Science, Mr. Herbert Arnold, Teachers College, Columbia University; Social Studies, Miss Lucile Faust, Alabama State Teachers College, Livingston, Alabama; Mathematics, Dr. W. A. Brownell, Duke University; Music, Miss Zadie Phipps, Florida State College for Women; Physical and Health Education, Dr. C. L. Brownell, Teachers College, Columbia University.

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### THE HOUSTON, TEXAS, EXPERIMENT WITH AN INTEGRATED COURSE OF STUDY

From 1924 to 1931 the teachers of the Houston elementary and junior schools have been teaching the social studies integrated, improving the methods and revising the courses continuously. In 1930 plans were made and committees put at work to develop a course of study in which all the subjects were to be integrated. In February 1931 an integrated course of study was tried out by thirty-six teachers in the elementary schools. The elementary schools of Houston are not departmentalized, so each teacher had an opportunity to teach through complete integration of all subjects. In the junior high schools, organized on a departmentalized plan, the courses of study were prepared in such a way that it was absolutely imperative that the teachers of the different departments work together and plan their programs together. The junior course of study units are set up giving the social science aspects of the unit; the English aspects of the unit; the arithmetic aspects of the unit, etc. In this way the teachers are teaching the same unit and the pupils use one note book for all subjects.

In setting up our intensive evaluation of the new curriculum and changed teaching methods we selected just a few of our teachers scattered throughout the city. The teachers considered it such a privilege and honor to have the opportunity to try out the integrated units and to use the suggested teaching procedures that it proved to be the high motivation for them to do good work. Practically all of the teachers were extremely enthusiastic over the method of teaching through integration. In the junior high schools where departmentalization has tended to isolate teachers from each other, there resulted a fortunate improvement in the socialization among the teachers themselves as they were thrown together to plan cooperatively the development of the integrated units.

In discussing the results which we have discovered and are discovering of this freer type of program, I hesitate to present my own personal reactions. The reactions of the teachers themselves speak better than I can for the advantages and disadvantages of our integrated curriculum. At the close of the year all of the teachers gave their reactions freely, independently, and without signing their statements. No questions were asked and no form was given which might have guided or directed their reactions. From the personal statements of the teachers (with the daily schedule and the teaching by subjects entirely eliminated except that one-fourth of the total time could be given to drill,) were gleaned the advantages and disadvantages of the integrated curriculum, a few of which are given here. Those teachers who were set up as control groups for the purpose of the evaluation were also asked to give their reactions. The following list presents some of their stated advantages and disadvantages. It is interesting to note that at the end of the period set for evaluating the unit every one of the forty-eight teachers who used the integrated curriculum method for a period of one year or a year and a half expressed a desire to continue teaching by this method. Of the twenty-four teachers whose classes were used as control groups all but one were opposed to fixed daily schedules.

#### Advantages of the integrated curriculum method as expressed by teachers:

- Broadens teacher's point of view.
- More and more enthusiastic reading done by the pupils.
- Timid become more self-confident.
- Pupils write to express themselves.
- Better oral expression through increased freedom of speech.
- Pupils learn to reach out and search for answers to problems.
- Freedom has made pupils more honest, more independent, and more original than otherwise.
- Children less nervous and restless.
- Awakens interest of parents - They want to know what it is the child is enjoying so much.



Worked marvels with problem children.  
 Creative work increases love of school and improves attendance.  
 More time for individual help.  
 Weaving every subject around one central theme has supplied a greater motive for work.  
 Different atmosphere in room, children seem to be working because they have something important to learn.

Problems of the integrated curriculum method as expressed by teachers:

Lack of material.  
 Discouragement of teacher in beginning.  
 Fixed desks a handicap.  
 Hard to control or direct a child's interest and enthusiasm.  
 Ideal for faster children but slower children do little independent work so learn only from teacher and from others in class.  
 Don't see how anyone but experienced teacher can do this work.  
 Need a week's routine work three or four times a year to check up.

Advantages of old curriculum as expressed by teachers of control group:

Glad to continue regular program but want social studies period.  
 Beneficial for pupils who do not have initiative.  
 Easier for teacher who doesn't have to worry about missing anything.

Disadvantages of old curriculum as expressed by teachers of control groups:

Handicap because must follow program too closely.  
 Pupils less interested.  
 Postponement of activities till next day kills interest.  
 Less chance to take care of individual differences.  
 Too much valueless drill.

It is hoped that complete results of our evaluation will be available by the close of this year. From the results which we have discovered to date we are extremely enthusiastic and intend to continue along this same line. As we expand the use of the integrated units we find it necessary to make individual adjustments with each teacher. We have some teachers working with no daily schedule at all; others with a daily schedule for all but one hour of the day. As quickly as the teachers who have been accustomed to following a routine schedule can show that they can profit by the greater freedom they are permitted to reduce the amount of time taught under fixed schedule.

The hundreds of written reactions of the pupils themselves and of their parents speak enthusiastically in favor of the integrated method. A few of the parents were concerned with the lack of stress given to phonics and to drill. Our results to date, however, are sufficient to justify a preliminary statement that in using the integrated curriculum a teacher need not spend more than one-third of her time in drill activity.

Supervision played a big part in the actual adaptation of the new methods. Special conferences with the supervisors and group discussions where the more successful teachers were selected to open the discussion on issues which presented difficulty were and are invaluable aids to the translation of the course of study into classroom practice. The next big step in the Houston curriculum construction program will be to see whether the same benefits which accrue from the integrated program in the elementary and junior high school will not also be obtainable in the senior high school.

W. W. Kemmerer, Director of Child Accounting and Curriculum, Houston Public Schools.

# THE CURRICULUM NUMBER OF THE JOURNAL OF EXPERIMENTAL EDUCATION

The June 1933 issue of the Journal of Experimental Education is devoted to curriculum construction. It includes four papers which report objective studies of the learning of the traditional fundamentals in activity curricula. Careful students of education will welcome this attempt at objective evaluation in a field in which there is so much controversy. Activity curricula, in various forms, are making rapid headway in the elementary schools. One of the first responsibilities of the experimenters is to demonstrate, if possible, to the adherents of the traditional curriculum that none of the basic conservative values are sacrificed in the activity school.

The authors include Junius L. Meriam who is one of the early founders of activity schools; Ellsworth Collings who has had continuous contact with project curricula during the past fifteen years; and L. Thomas Hopkins who reports the work of the Lincoln School which maintains, perhaps, the most complete research facilities of all the private experimental schools. The results of experimentation in the public schools is reported by members of the Curriculum and Research Department of the Pasadena, California, Public Schools.

In these studies no attempt is made to evaluate results other than achievement in the traditionally accepted fundamentals. This is probably due to common curiosity concerning such results and to the ease with which they may be measured. Whether the attainment of the intangible values that are claimed for the activity curricula can be satisfactorily measured or whether they should be measured at all remains to be settled in the future.

Leo J. Brueckner analyzes contemporary social issues which involve quantitative thinking and suggests that their inclusion in mathematics courses would vitalize and humanize that subject and contribute to clear and accurate thinking in public affairs.

Doris Tyrrell takes a portion of an old analysis of secretarial duties and traits, and projects the investigation several degrees further with a view to securing guidance in the construction of an office practice course. In addition to frequency, the investigator applies the criteria of importance, difficulty, and desirability of pre-service training.

Robert P. Wray's study is welcome because it pertains to the field of chemistry which has been subjected to a functional test only to a very limited degree. The criteria of usefulness to the layman which the investigator applied are frequency and satisfaction. Davis and Wilbur analyze curriculum research to discover the procedures, sources, and statistical techniques which have been employed in the last ten years.

This issue represents a second phase in curriculum research; the checking on innovations; the evaluation of and the following up of old procedures; and the evaluation of research techniques.

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## THE ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF CURRICULUM PROGRAMS IN CITIES OVER 50,000 POPULATION : AN ABSTRACT

**Purpose and Problem.** The purpose of this study is to discover the practices and procedures used by city school systems in organizing and administering their curriculum programs, and to evaluate those practices and procedures in order to establish an optimum program for effective curriculum work.

The four major parts of the study are: first, the practices and procedures in organizing and administering curriculum programs; second, the participation of personnel in the programs; third, the cost of the programs; and fourth, the value of the programs.

Procedure. The investigation was conducted by means of: (1) a survey of the literature in the field; (2) questionnaire returns from the administrators of one hundred school systems in American cities over 30,000 in population; (3) an evaluation of practices and procedures used in the light of expert opinion of the nation's leading curriculum specialists; and (4) personal visitations of three city school systems.

Findings. (1) Ninety-three of the one hundred cities studied have some type of curriculum program, eighty-six of which are continuous; (2) the main bases for the selection of curriculum workers are strong teaching ability, special interest in curriculum work, substantial college training including curriculum study, and the ability to write and to organize materials; (3) in a single year the number of persons working on the program of a single city ranges from three to 600, with a median of seventy-five; (4) the number of curriculum committees which worked on the programs during 1931-1932 ranged from none to eighty-five, with a median of ten; (5) one-fourth of the cities are assisted by curriculum specialists; (6) half the school men believe that the state should offer more curriculum assistance than is granted at present; (7) teachers are usually assigned curriculum tasks in addition to other duties but there is a growing tendency to release active workers from other duties; (8) the amount of money spent by the cities for curriculum activities in 1931-1932 ranged from \$30 to \$70,000, with a median amount of \$3,000; (9) fifteen cities have no definite programs for appraising their curriculum work; (10) the greatest improvements due to curriculum work have been the stimulation of educational staff members and a richer educational offering for pupils; (11) the five most difficult problems encountered are: finding time for curriculum work, establishing a sound philosophy upon which to build the program, financing the program, training new curriculum workers, and establishing a program of appraisal.

Recommendations. Present practice and expert opinion justify the following recommendations: (1) the curriculum program should be continuous; (2) the program should involve both the creation of new courses and the revision and adaptation of old materials; (3) the first year of the program should be utilized in preparing the educational staff for its inception; (4) professional library facilities are indispensable for curriculum workers; (5) those responsible for curriculum programs should attempt to utilize the advisory service possibilities of certain selected laymen; (6) money to be spent on curriculum work should be estimated and provided for in the annual budget, and its expenditure should be carefully accounted; (7) the success of the curriculum program should be measured through: test results, experimentation and research, teacher, pupil, and community reactions, and occasional evaluation by experts or universities. The author proposes a complete plan for organizing curriculum programs in cities over 50,000 in population.

C. C. Trillingham, University of Southern California.

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#### COOPERATIVE PRODUCTION OF TEXTBOOKS

Why isn't it possible and desirable for perhaps a selected number of our curriculum group to develop experimentally and cooperatively textbooks in a variety of fields? These textbooks would be published as a joint enterprise and without profit. We have long extolled collective effort as opposed to individualistic effort. Why can't we demonstrate it in the production of teaching materials?

This line of thinking is prompted at this moment through reviewing a number of commercial textbooks. The writers of these textbooks stopped being scientists when they began writing these books and forthwith attempted to prepare a book that would sell better than its competitor put out by a rival publishing house. One fails to see in the prefaces of these books that note of uncertainty and doubt as to certain teaching practices which the authors of these books make in private conversation.

Some suggested projects for such a cooperative group are the following:

1. A basic or minimal spelling list, the list to be grouped and classified according to children's interests.
2. Reading materials in the social studies which acquaint the child with current conditions. This means the putting into simple language important contemporary writing, such as that of Stuart Chase, John Dewey, and others.
3. Developing a classified group of arithmetic problems -- problems which deal with, let us say, government business. I am thinking now of substituting a whole new category of problems for the typical ones dealing with profit and loss in the usual arithmetic textbook. We talk about a world in which property will be used for the benefit of all and not for the profit of a few, but continue to keep the profit motive in our arithmetic textbooks.

You could doubtless add to this list with projects in which you have an interest. Some of the projects would be relatively easy to start with; others would be difficult.

The easy reaction to such a proposal is that it won't work, that people are too self-interested and too dominated by the profit motive. Perhaps this is true. However, if a group of professional men in a field where we have a type of security denied to most professions cannot work out a project such as this, co-operatively, then I shudder for the future.

Edgar Dale, Ohio State University.

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#### TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULA

The Education and Certification of Elementary Teachers by Frank P. Bachman is the latest analysis of teacher education. This is the fifth of a series of field studies published by the Division of Survey and Field Studies of George Peabody College for Teachers, Nashville, Tennessee. The present course offerings in teacher colleges and normal schools in 48 teachers colleges, (one for each state) are given in great detail. The allotment of time to liberal and technical subjects is reported. The study includes proposed programs of liberal and technical training for curricula of several types. The "liberal-cultural" equipment of the teacher is given special emphasis.

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